

fact that we do not think the Government should be doing this. The stations that had this story and did not realize it was not fresh news included a station in Memphis, TN, WHBQ; KGTV in San Diego; WDRB in Louisville, KY. The list goes on and on about producers who were fooled by the fact that they were getting a propaganda piece and did not recognize that it was not news.

If the news stations did not know the story was produced by the Government, how would the viewer ever know that? How would a family, let's say, in Covington, TN, watching WHBQ, know that Karen Ryan, the person in this case, is not a reporter? How would they know the news story they just watched was concocted to sell something, actually Government propaganda? The reality is, they would not know.

We had a situation of similar character with a reporter named Armstrong Williams. Mr. Williams had a program, a news program, and he was paid a couple hundred thousand dollars, as I remember the number, to take this story and talk about it as news when, in fact, it was a paid-for story designed to deceive, very frankly. So we have seen it.

The GAO said that this practice is not only wrong but illegal. The GAO said the fake news stories were illegal because they did not disclose the fact that the Government was behind it. GAO is right. We cannot allow covert propaganda to be done by our Government, continued by a practice that has been condemned by GAO.

The Byrd amendment will give Federal agencies clear direction on this issue. It is a simple proposition: The Government needs to disclose its role. I do not think that is a lot to ask; otherwise, every ad that goes on the air has a disclosure on it. It identifies the product, uses a trademark, all kinds of things. But they make sure people know it is being done for a mission.

For whatever reason, the administration has refused to go along with the GAO ruling. They have said so: Yes, we know it. But so what? The Office of Management and Budget recently sent out a memo saying that agencies could continue to produce fake news stories and hide the Government's role.

That is their opinion, but I don't agree with it. Certainly, the Byrd amendment challenges that view. We need to be straight with the American people. When we are running ads, it has to say, ad run by the United States Government. We need to reject covert government propaganda. We can do it today with this amendment. The Byrd amendment will make the rules on this matter crystal clear. I hope we can get the support to do this, to say to the American people, when you see a piece of news, don't let it be biased by Government ads that pay for it. Why would the Government pay for it? Once again, when an ad is run, it is to sell someone a bill of goods. That doesn't mean it is a bad piece of goods, but it is designed to sell something. We ought not let

that be the product of the United States Government when talking to the people across the country.

I hope we will be able to pass this. I commend the Senator from West Virginia for offering it. I hope our colleagues will support it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from New Jersey for his comments and support. I thank him profusely.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on the pending Mikulski amendment.

Mr. COCHRAN. Reserving the right to object—I, of course, will not object—it is my hope that we can continue to deal with the Byrd amendment and dispose of the Byrd amendment. Then the Senator can talk about the Mikulski amendment or any other amendment he wants to talk about.

I do not have an objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 387

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to talk about the amendment offered by the Senator from Maryland. As a cosponsor of that amendment, I rise in support of this amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill.

The Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act, on which this amendment is based, is very important to my State of Vermont. This amendment will ensure the seasonal businesses in our country have the workers they need to support their company, our local economics, and to help the U.S. economy flourish. Action on this critical issue is long overdue.

In March of last year, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services announced they had received enough petitions to meet the cap on the H-2B visas. As a result, they stopped accepting petitions for these temporary work visas halfway through the Federal fiscal year. This announcement was a shock to many businesses throughout the country that depend on foreign workers to fill their temporary and seasonal positions.

Tourism is the largest sector of Vermont's economy and, as a result, many Vermont businesses hire seasonal staff during their summer, winter, or fall seasons. Last year, I heard from many Vermont businesses that were unable to employ foreign workers for their summer and fall seasons because the cap had been reached. Not only was this unexpected, but many of the individuals were people who had been returning to the same employer year after year. These employers lost essential staff and, in many cases, well-trained, experienced employees.

While I am proud to say that Vermont businesses have risen to this challenge with hard work and creativity in the past, the need for these workers has not, and will not, dimin-

ish. Congress must act and must act now. The companies I have heard from are proud of the work their staffs have done under these circumstances. Yet they believe their businesses and their personnel will suffer if they are not able to employ seasonal foreign workers again this year. Many foresee a devastating effect on their businesses if they are not able to bring in foreign workers soon.

I have also heard from Vermont businesses that they had to lay off or not hire American workers because they could not find enough employees to round out their crews. Without having the sufficient number of workers to complete projects, they could not hire or maintain their year-round staff. They also could not bid on projects and many had to scale back their operations. In these instances, the lack of seasonal workers had a detrimental effect on our economy and on the employment of American workers.

As many may know, I strongly believe American workers must be given the opportunity to fill jobs and that this Nation's strength is in its own workforce. However, the companies that have contacted me did their utmost to find Americans for positions available. Efforts to find American workers included working closely with the State of Vermont's Employment and Training Office, increasing wages and benefits, and implementing aggressive, year-round recruiting.

We are lucky in Vermont to count tourism among our chief industries, and we have our beautiful rural landscape to thank for the visitors who flock to our small State each year. While many Vermont businesses were able to survive last year, thanks to that old Yankee ingenuity, I am not optimistic about this year. It is imperative we immediately address this problem in order to prevent further harm to this Nation's small businesses and the economy.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment by Senator MIKULSKI.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 430

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Byrd-Lautenberg amendment. I would like to say a few words. I know we may be moving close to a vote, and the chairman of the committee has been patiently awaiting that possibility.

Tonight you are going to turn on your nightly news and try to get some information. People do it all the time. You expect when you turn on your television and turn on a newscast, the information being given to you is objective, at least as objective as people can make it. It isn't a paid advertisement; it is the news. If you are running a paid advertisement, you would know it. It would have laundry detergent on it or some new pharmaceutical drug or a political ad with a disclaimer at the bottom.